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R&D Budget: Defense Goes Up, Biomedical Goes Down

As a guide to the future, the recessional budget that President Ford sent to Congress last week is as reliable as the timetable of a railroad on the brink of bankruptcy. Nevertheless, for what it's worth – probably not much – the budget promises large, though highly selective, increases for science and technology.

As has been widely reported, Ford's overall fiscal strategy is to hold down federal expenditures in all but a few favored fields, cut back on health and welfare spending, and attempt to fight off the recession by tax reductions. The research and development proposals reflect the warped priorities evident in the rest of the budget document, and it can be safely assumed that Congress won't go along with too many of them.

Massive increases have been proposed for military science and technology, while biomedical research has been slated for radical surgery (see page 3). The burgeoning costs of the space shuttle have helped push NASA's proposed budget up by nearly $300 million, while the budget for the National Science Foundation would be held to something less than a cost-of-living increase. The exact situation in energy R&D is as confused as ever, but the overall picture is that obligations would go up by about $200 million, or 10 percent, while outlays, reflecting the spectacular growth in obligations of the past two years, would jump by 33 percent. Administration spokesmen have chosen to emphasize the latter figure.

Taking the budget figures at face value, which calls for considerable charity, the total being proposed for R&D obligations in FY 1976 is $21.6 billion, with almost $1 billion more slated for construction of facilities. That would represent an overall growth of $2.8 billion, or 15 percent, which would be more than enough to offset inflation – estimated by Administration officials to be running at about 8 percent for R&D.

One factor which makes the picture look slightly less rosy, however, is that President Ford has proposed cuts in funds which Congress had already appropriated for some programs in 1975 – health programs figure most prominently among them. The proposed cuts, which total more than $500 million for R&D activities, have been incorporated into the budget figures, thereby greatly increasing the differences between the totals shown for FY 1975 and 1976.

Be that as it may, the Administration has, for years been touting the line that it has been reordering priorities in federal science and technology by increasing expenditures on so-called "civilian" projects while easing off on military R&D. This budget makes no such pretense.

Military R&D obligations, funded through the Department of Defense and the Energy Research and Development Administration (which picked up the AEC's nuclear weapons programs because there was nowhere else to put them) are favored with a staggering increase of $1.9 billion, rising from an estimated $9.5 billion this year to $11.4 billion next. In the unlikely event that Congress appropriates all of that increase, military R&D would climb from 50.5 percent to 52.8 percent of total expenditures on science and technology.

The budget documents are characteristically vague on exactly what would benefit from the rise in military R&D funds, but the B-1 bomber and development of more

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In Brief

NASA, ever on the lookout for ways to stay alive, has signed an agreement with the Interior Department for work on coal research. A NASA announcement says the space agency will offer its experience "in the development of systems for manned and automated operation in hostile environments."

Congressmen dissatisfied with the location of presidential science advice in the Office of the Director of the National Science Foundation have a new slogan for their campaign to restore it to the White House: Down the Hall, Not the Mall. Meanwhile, that Rockefeller study of White House science advice appears to have been sidetracked by the Vice President's assignment to investigate the CIA.

Middle East oil riches are becoming more than a trickle in American higher educational finance. Rockefeller University is deep in a study aimed at setting up a big biomedical research establishment in Iran, and a major New England university expects to complete negotiations soon for a $1.6 million contract to develop academic programs in Saudi Arabia.

Restrictions on human experimentation, most publicized in connection with HEW-supported activities, are also proving to be a damper on Defense-supported research. A military nutrition specialist told SGR that even routine dietary studies now require consent forms, and that the "dropout" option that must be offered all participants sometimes results in massive attrition, whereas in the past, with no such option, there was very little.

...Budget (Continued): A Standstill for Basic Research

accurate long-range missiles for the Trident submarine would carry off a good deal of the increase. Another noteworthy fact is that ERDA is putting in for a further sharp increase in funds for weapons testing in order to beat the deadline for large explosions if a threshold test ban is ever negotiated to the satisfaction of the Senate.

Since some key Senators and Congressmen have been taking an increasingly skeptical view of Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger's contention that wondrous new developments in Soviet weaponry call for huge increases in the Pentagon's R&D budget (SGR Vol. V, No. 3), it's highly doubtful that Congress will satisfy the military's appetite.

In contrast to the generosity that the Ford Administration has shown toward the Pentagon, the budgets being proposed for basic research are miserly, at best. Even NSF Director H. Guyford Stever admitted at a press briefing on the overall R&D budget that "we would have preferred a higher number" for basic research support, while recipients of federal research funds in the universities could be forgiven for describing the situation in rather less restrained terms.

According to an analysis prepared by the Federal Council on Science and Technology, support of basic research is slated to rise by 8 percent, barely enough to keep pace with inflation. But even that figure should be taken with skepticism, since a good deal of the increase is accounted for by the fact that the estimated expenditures in FY 1975 are depressed by Ford's proposed recissions and deferrals. Moreover, R&D funds flowing into colleges and universities are expected to increase next year by about 2 percent, which is clearly not enough to counteract inflation.

Although it's impossible to predict at this stage just what Congress will do to the budget, it can safely be assumed that the proposed cuts in biomedical research will be fiercely resisted, as will the suggested increases in military R&D. Priorities are also likely to be adjusted within the energy R&D budget to favor solar, geothermal and fusion technologies against nuclear power. It should be noted, moreover, that this will be the first budget to come under Congress's new appropriations process (SGR Vol. V, No. 2), which should, in theory, help sharpen choices between the various programs competing for a share of the pie.

Even when allowance is made for the obfuscating factors in the budget, it's clear that science and technology have fared well in relation to most federal activities and Stever, who doubles as NSF Director and science adviser to the White House, has taken some of the credit for the increases. Noting that critics of the present science advisory apparatus have argued that federal R&D has been "drifting" over the past couple of years, Stever pointed out that at least it has been "drifting upward." –C.N.

CONDUCT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BY MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES
(in millions of dollars)

	Obligations			Outlays		
Department or Agency	1974 actual	1975 estimate	1976 estimate	1974 actual	1975 estimate	1976 estimate
Defense–Military functions	8,396	8,833	10,608	8,791	8,913	9,997
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	3,024	3,327	3,526	3,181	3,107	3,390
Energy Research and Development Administration	1,475	1,893	2,346	1,475	1,893	2,346
Health, Education, and Welfare	2,286	2,092	2,285	1,888	2,176	2,223
National Science Foundation	556	619	680	571	573	630
Agriculture	384	428	468	377	428	470
Transportation	370	368	402	328	372	379
Interior	198	303	315	202	259	312
Environmental Protection Agency	177	287	300	163	230	304
Commerce	181	211	230	177	204	220
Veterans Administration	87	102	102	80	96	97
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	44	59	96	42	55	88
Housing and Urban Development	65	58	65	58	56	61
Justice	37	67	45	44	58	45
All other	127	135	134	143	155	138
Total	17,408	18,780	21,602	17,522	18,575	20,698
Total, conduct of research	7,163	7,545	8,256	6,783	7,435	8,188
Total, conduct of development	10,245	11,235	13,346	10,739	11,140	12,511

NIH Budget: Sharp Cutbacks Even for Cancer

Further deterioration can be anticipated in the already hostile relationships between the Administration and the biomedical research community as a result of President Ford's budget proposals. Radical surgery has been prescribed for NIH and other research agencies in HEW, and even the politically sacrosanct cancer and heart programs have not been spared from the budget-cutters' knives.

In short, Ford has proposed slashing a total of $351 million from the funds which Congress has already appropriated for NIH for FY 1975, and he has suggested that only $72 million of that cut should be reinstated next year. In other words, the budget that Ford has proposed for NIH in FY 1976 is some $280 million less than Congress has already approved for 1975.

The picture is the same in other HEW agencies, for cuts amounting to some $53.6 million have been slated for 1975 research and training funds for mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse, and the Center for Disease Control has also been prescribed a cut of $9.8 million.

Before those cuts can be made, however, Congress must give its express approval within 45 days, and it's almost inconceivable that it will do so. Congress has repeatedly, and often unquestioningly, championed the cause of the biomedical research community against the axe-wielding policies of the Office of Management and Budget, and there's no reason to expect the new, and supposedly more liberal, Congress to behave any differently. The proposed cuts should therefore be seen simply as a public gesture of the Administration's intention to "bite the bullet," on federal spending, even though Congress may not share its taste.

One reason why Congress will find it hard to dismiss the pleas of anguish that are sure to come from the medical schools is that, when stated in terms of their effect on numbers of grants, Ford's proposed budget cuts look horrendous. According to figures being prepared at NIH, even if all the money appropriated for 1975 is allocated, the proportion of approved grants that would actually be funded would drop from 53 percent last year to 49 percent this year. But if Ford's proposed cuts are accepted, the number would sink to 29 percent this year and it would decline even further, to 18 percent next year.

Stated in terms of absolute numbers, the picture is even gloomier. NIH has determined that a total of 4360 new and competing grants would be funded if the Congressionally appropriated funds are all allocated this year, but only 2320 would be funded if the proposed cuts are made. Furthermore, a 5 percent cut would be made in every NIH grant for projects that are already under way. With inflation running at its present rate and showing no sign of easing, the effect of such cuts would be severe.

For the National Cancer Institute alone, which has been sheltered in the past from the worst of the fiscal chills that have swept the NIH campus, the reduction proposed for 1975 would amount to $123 million. In terms of new grants, NIH officials reckon that the level appropriated by Congress would enable about 1200 competing projects to be funded by NCI this year, while only about 580 would be funded if NCI's budget sinks to the level that Ford has proposed.

The cuts would also hit hard at a program particularly dear to the fiscal well-being of the medical schools – the biomedical research training programs supported by NIH and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA). According to HEW, out of $153 million appropriated by Congress for NIH training grants this year, only $131 million would be spent if Ford's budget is accepted. And next year, the total would shrink again, to $124 million, a figure which would provide support for only 1000 new postdoctoral students. The proposed cuts in ADAMHA's training grants for FY 1975 are even more severe. They would amount to some $37.6 million out of an appropriated total of $40.8 million.

With NIH's 1975 budget still in doubt, the 1976 figures are totally uncertain. The best that can be said, therefore, is that confusion is likely to reign for some time in the medical schools and university biology departments.

California Seeks A-Power Vote

Plagued by rising costs that have caused the cancellation of many power plant projects, the nuclear power industry is now faced with the likelihood of a statewide referendum that could close California to atomic power.

Signatures to place such a proposition on the June 1976 primary ballot are being collected by a coalition known as the California Committee for Nuclear Safeguards, which includes the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and Zero Population Growth, all under the chairmanship of the Los Angeles director of Ralph Nader's Citizen Action Organization. The coalition says it has collected 216,000 of the 313,000 signatures that it needs for an April 7 deadline to qualify for the ballot.

Though the coalition says its aim is to place the burden of proof of safety on the nuclear industry, rather than close down atomic energy in California, the latter would most likely be the outcome if the proposed proposition gets a majority. Under the coalition's plan, an expert panel would advise the Legislature on nuclear projects, and a go-ahead would require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. Until approval was forthcoming, existing plants would be permitted to operate at only 60 percent of full power, and this would annually be reduced by 10 percent until the Legislature voted approval.

Social Sciences: The Tortured Saga of NIMH

As director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in the middle and late 1960s, Stanley Yolles envisioned an institution that would finance and orchestrate the behavioral and social sciences in the same stunning fashion that its sister agency, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), had performed for the basic biomedical sciences.

Semantics being important in bureaucratic jousting, Yolles' vision extended to a National *Institutes* of Mental Health, with its own sprawling campus at some attractive locale, such as the "new town" of Columbia, Md., on the rim of the Washington metropolitan area. It may be speculated that Yolles' predecessor, Robert Felix, held a similar ambition when he headed the old division of mental health within NIH before public fascination with mental health resulted in that division being spun off to become NIMH. And it wasn't long ago that Yolles' successor, Bert Brown, the current director of NIMH, was talking about the "institutes" when Congress set up an alcoholism institute within NIMH.

Times have changed. There are now three institutes spawned by NIMH, but the structure is not exactly what any one designer had in mind. While NIH has gone rolling along – not without its problems, to be sure – NIMH has yielded to various public fads, Congressional pet interests, administration whims, Office of Management and Budget twitches, and bureaucratic realignments. We now behold the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and NIMH itself – all within an organization titled the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA). The tripartite arrangement is more a result of cannibalizing NIMH than strengthening it, and all three institutes are suffering from an accumulation of ambiguous responsibilities, reduced budgets and enduring reorganization jitters.

Yolles' idea wasn't so radical at the time, considering the times. By the mid-sixties, NIMH had undergone a period of increased research funding, the bulk of which went toward basic research on the fundamental processes underlying human development and behavior. Congress was ready to lay on the agency the task of blanketing the country with community mental health centers which, hopefully, would treat people where they lived, prevent mental problems and eliminate the mental hospital population. That charge would add a major service component to a traditional research and training outfit.

As social problems caught on, NIMH added centers on crime and delinquency, metropolitan problems, minority mental health problems and other topics. Drug abuse and alcoholism became hot items. The Nixon administration, though having no great love for NIMH, was keen for drug-related programs. Former Sen. Harold Hughes (D-Iowa) was using his evangelical powers to whip up support for alcoholism research and treatment. The Senate had a new subcommittee on alcoholism and narcotics, the Administration had a Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention, and NIMH, by 1972, was devoting 25 percent of its research budget to these two priorities and had acquired a drug abuse division and the institute on alcoholism.

However, the Nixon Administration then began to reverse much of what barely had been started. On top of increasing budget stringency, there was a drive to do away with the social programs of the sixties, including community mental health centers, an attempt to target research on selected problems, an effort to cut training funds to academic institutions, and repeated tries at instituting purported organizational efficiencies.

Since 1967, when NIMH was formally and officially

(Continued on Page 5)

Interagency Study to Examine Freon-Ozone Relationship

Following by several months authoritative reports that the presence of life on this globe is seriously threatened by escaped freon reducing the ozone barrier to ultraviolet radiation, the federal government has responded with the appointment of a 12-agency ad hoc group to look into the matter and prepare a report within four months.

The group, titled the Federal Interagency Task Force on Inadvertent Modification of the Stratosphere, will be known as IMOS, according to a press release, though, as anyone can see, it should be called FITFIMS. Either way, it is administratively a creation of the Council on Environmental Quality and the Federal Council for Science and Technology, and is supposed to "summarize atmospheric, medical, and ecological information on the subject, evaluate possible economic impacts and alternatives available to the industry, define potentially applicable authorities under which Federal actions can be taken, and outline the proposed Federal program to resolve the issue" – which means there will be no report within four months.

Contacts for the study are: Ms. Carroll Pegler, National Science Foundation, Science and Technology Policy Office, Washington, D.C. (202–632-7447), and Warren R. Muir, Council on Environmental Quality, Washington, D.C. (382-6854).

...(Continued) At One Point It "Was Legally Dead."

declared separate but equal with NIH, it spent time as an independent agency, was absorbed into a conglomerate Health Services and Mental Health Administration, was kicked back into NIH when HSMHA was disbanded, and, finally, was divided into three institutes, with the personnel, money and operational support for the two new institutes and the host agency coming from NIMH. At one point, while NIMH existed in fact, it was legally dead.

The Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration was created administratively in September, 1973, in a stated attempt to establish a functional setup for health agencies outside NIH. The Administration wanted services, training and research housed separately. By this time, drugs and alcoholism had strong constituencies and wanted greater visibility for those programs. In short, they wanted their own institutes. The alcoholism constituency, in particular, didn't want to be under the mental health rubric. For a while, it looked like NIMH might be totally dismantled. After fiddling with the idea of an overall behavior agency to house the institutes – the word behavior was politically unfeasible – the reorganization settled on ADAMHA. The three agencies would retain their separate research, training and service programs. Meanwhile, the new conglomerate went without an administrator for over a year. During this time, the apparent choice for the job, Bert Brown, logged many miles traveling to international meetings. In troubled times, there's no profile like a low profile.

A recent research review report from NIMH suggests that all the buffeting of the recent past has taken its toll. The report sets forth research priorities for mental health, alcoholism and drug research that the proposed budget wouldn't come close to funding. The report notes that basic research has suffered most of all. Of the extramural research grants program at NIMH, for example, about one-third of the money goes for basic research and two-thirds goes to applied research. In the early sixties, the ratio was the reverse.

Now, the new Ford budget would reduce funds for all the institutes. Mental health research grants would get $56.9 million, a low point for recent years. In FY 1972, the figure was $63 million. Continuing the policy of the previous Administration, the budget would continue paying off commitments to existing community mental health centers – the estimate is that 543 centers will be operational next year – but there's no intention to create new centers. In addition, the budget continues the policy of phasing out training programs, providing funds only for honoring commitments and for competing, individual fellowships. Drug abuse research would get $31.5 million and alcoholism research would get $9 million. After encouraging the creation of drug and alcoholism treatment projects, the Administration is now asking states and localities to pay a larger share of the costs.

In addition to budget and bureaucratic woes, there are other problems. Community mental health centers are often criticized for not reaching those who still wind up in institutions. Alcoholism treatment programs have shared in that criticism, with some saying that the largest proportion of problem drinkers is untouched by traditional treatment programs. As for drugs, many are soured on drug maintenance programs for hard-core addicts and others point to major polydrug, or multiple drug problems, among the general public that go unattended and are even encouraged by current medical practices of overprescribing.

The question now is what the next incarnation of the agency will bring.

Incidentally, like so much else concerning NIMH and its organizational descendents, the dream of an NIH-like campus has gone awry. ADAHMA is headquartered in a non-descript suburban office building that it shares with several other federal agencies, with various overflows housed in farflung annexes around Washington.

–Pamela Moore

(Ms. Moore, Executive/Washington editor for **Behavior Today**, *will report periodically for SGR on the behavioral and social sciences.)*

Budget-Time Boost for Physics

The fortunate discovery of two elementary particles just as the finishing touches were being put to the Administration's budget for high-energy physics may have helped lift the flagging fortunes of that esoteric science. Moreover, the Office of Management and Budget has granted a stay of its execution order for the Zero Gradient Synchrotron (SGR Vol. IV, No. 18), which will now probably be kept alive until late 1978.

The overall budget request for high-energy physics – which now comes under the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) – amounts to $148.3 million, which represents an increase of $16.8 million over this year's expenditures. If Congress agrees to that request, it would be the first real increase in funds for high energy physics for several years.

In recent years, the Fermi accelerator at Batavia, Illinois, has been soaking up an increasing share of the overall accelerator budget, with the result that two accelerators have been shut down to accommodate its needs. This year, however, the Fermi machine is slated for a modest increase, $7.2 million, and the rest of the $16 million increase will be divided roughly in proportion among the other accelerators.

According to John Teem, who looks after high energy physics in ERDA, the objective is to try to increase the utilization of all the accelerators instead of favoring just one machine.

Energy R&D: A Big Rise in Spending is Forecast

In view of the gloomy economic picture painted by President Ford's first budget, the Administration has understandably chosen to highlight the fact that energy research and development has been exempted from the blanket moratorium on new federal projects next year. But fiscal sleight-of-hand, varying accounting procedures and rhetorical overkill have managed to cast confusion over exactly what the Administration is proposing to spend.

Two trends are evident, however. The first is that after a couple of years of spectacular growth, obligations for energy R&D are slated for only a 10 percent increase next year. But, because expenditures often lag behind obligations, the steep rise in outlays on energy R&D shows little sign of tailing off, and the Administration has suggested that another 33 percent increase should be anticipated next year. The second major trend is that although generous helpings have been proposed for such items as solar, geothermal and fusion technologies, nuclear energy is again set to receive the lion's share of energy research funds, and it has also been slated for a large budget increase.

Although it is difficult to tell exactly what is being proposed for energy research and development next year, since different agencies seem to have their own ideas on what should be included under the heading and also the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) has chosen to express its budget in terms of outlays rather than obligations, few changes of direction can be discerned.

It should be noted, however, that since ERDA was established only two weeks before the budget was published, its top officials had little chance to shape the overall proposals. In fact, ERDA Administrator Robert C. Seamans Jr. said in testimony before the House Science and Technology Committee last week that "we will, in the next few months, be reviewing further our programs and may need to recommend some changes in our request in order to carry out our development efforts most effectively and to ensure proper emphasis and balance."

Seamans presented the committee with a breakdown of ERDA's budget request which indicates that nuclear fission is at least holding its own in competition for federal R&D funds. The increases being proposed for nuclear fission technology, nuclear materials production and isotope separation amount to about 27 percent, a figure which one key Congressional aide last week termed "surprisingly large." It should also be noted that the bulk of the $629 million slated for capital equipment would go to the nuclear power program.

Moreover, although the helpings proposed for solar and geothermal energy look generous enough, they should be seen in the light of Congressional appropriations for 1975 of $50 million for solar energy and $44 million for geothermal. The small amounts estimated for those programs this year have evoked some surprise on Capitol Hill.

Although it is too early to tell just what Congress will do with ERDA's budget request, it is a safe bet that more emphasis will be given to ERDA's non-nuclear programs.

Letter To The Editor

I resent your patronizing tone towards me in your issue of February 1, 1975. There is nothing Pseudo about me. Had you spent one minute on the phone with any senior biochemist at the NIH you would have found out the following:

> As a hobby, I write histories of science, for one of which I received the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation Award as the best science book in 1961. Moreover, I am still on the front lines of science. I discovered the first qualitatively altered biochemical component which is characteristic of every tumor tissue examined. On the basis of my work the NCI is developing successfully biochemical markers for cancer diagnosis.

As to your request for documented cases of faked data; if you were conversant with the way some of these surface you would not ask for it. No one states in writing that, "my assistant faked the published data." The way it is done is as follows: "the data reported by X and myself cannot be repeated."

I do not want a subscription to your paper but if you promise to pay $100.00 for each such case and for one documented case of ambulance chasing and if you promise not to publish them I will sent you a few.

But you may publish this.

Very truly yours,

Ernest Borek, Ph.D.
Professor of Microbiology
Medical Center
University of Colorado

Editor's note: If, as Dr. Borek stated in his *New York Times* article of January 22, he possesses knowledge of undisclosed corrupt practices in science, SGR believes it is his duty to protect the integrity of science by identifying the culprits, with the understanding that if the information can be verified, it will be published. Otherwise, we are being treated to a replay of tactics that earned a place in history for a late senator from Wisconsin.

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Presidential Panel Begins Biomedical Research Inquiry

After a long and unexplained delay, the clock began running January 31 on a high-level, 15-month study that is intended to root out the malaise and administrative wrangling that have beset the National Institutes of Health and other health research components of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The biomedical and behavioral research communities ought to take due note of the existence of this development – and get its thoughts in the mill – for the odds are that a lot of long-enduring policymaking will be the outcome of the inquiry.

To be conducted by what is known as the Biomedical Research Panel, the study traces back to Congressional discontent with the Nixon Administration's fiscal grandstanding in behalf of cancer research to the alleged detriment of other parts of NIH. In an attempt to publicize the budgetary lag of research unblessed by the cancer label, Senator Kennedy and several colleagues last year proposed the creation of a biomedical research commission that would oversee NIH affairs, along the lines of the President's Cancer Panel, which meets monthly. The Cancer Panel is a creation of the National Cancer Act of 1971, and is constituted as a sovereign body that is supposed to give the cancer research establishment instant and unencumbered access to the White House. HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger, sensing that Kennedy wanted to interpose still another biomedical lobby between HEW and the White House, threatened a presidential veto of the proposal; finally, after much maneuvering, Nixon agreed last July to a one-shot study by a presidentially appointed panel, as a substitute for a continuing panel that would monthly plague the Administration for all time. The legislation creating the panel gave it a broad mandate to inquire into and make recommendations concerning HEW's biomedical and behavioral research programs.

In the following months, Nixon's resignation and Ford's long period of drift provided a reasonable explanation of the White House's failure to appoint the panel, but as fall turned into winter, and the appointments were still not forthcoming, the delay became unfathomable. Inquiries to HEW produced the explanation that it had forwarded a list of suggested appointees to the White House, and that it had even assembled the nucleus of a staff for the yet-unappointed panel. Inquiries to the White House failed to turn up anyone who seemed to be more than faintly aware of the Congressionally mandated study.

By coincidence or not, the situation suddenly changed following the swearing in of Vice President Rockefeller. Late in January it was announced that appointment of the panel was imminent, and on January 31, Rockefeller swore in the members. Since anyone from a justice of the peace upwards could do that, it may be assumed that the Vice President – reflecting his own and his family's longstanding support for health research – opted for the task as a signal of personal interest.

The Panel Membership

The members of the Biomedical Research Panel are:

Chairman, Franklin Murphy, a physician and former UCLA chancellor, currently chairman of the board, Times-Mirror Corp., Los Angeles;

Vice Chairman, Robert Ebert, dean, Harvard Medical School;

Ewald Busse, department of psychiatry, Duke University Medical Center;

Albert Lehninger, department of physiological chemistry, Johns Hopkins University Medical Center;

Paul Marks, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University;

Benno Schmidt, *ex officio*, as chairman of the President's Cancer Panel;

David Skinner, department of surgery, University of Chicago.

The staff director is Richard Greulich, scientific director of the National Institute of Dental Research.

The address is: Biomedical Research Panel, 2401 E St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20520.

The panel will hold its first meeting February 24, and probably will announce its plans of operations shortly afterwards. Since it is due to report in April 1976, and has tentatively decided to meet no more often than two days per month, the burden will be on the staff. In any case, with both NIH and the health part of HEW currently leaderless, and the Ford Administration planning massive cuts in biomedical spending, the panel is in a key position to exercise considerable influence.

NASA: The Shuttle Dominates The Budget

During the day-long round of press briefings that precedes public release of the budget, most government officials describe their proposed allotments in upbeat language, highlighting those programs favored with budget increases rather than those slated for the axe. But this year NASA Administrator James C. Fletcher couldn't quite bring himself to thank OMB for its generosity.

Describing the proposed NASA budget as "lean but manageable," Fletcher went on to note that for the first time since at least the early 1960s, no new projects will be started by NASA next year. He then informed the assembled press that about $72 million in 1975 funds has been deferred until 1976, which may cause launch dates for some applications satellites to be postponed, and noted that the increases proposed for most NASA activities next year probably won't be sufficient to keep ahead of inflation.

Nevertheless, NASA is at least slated for a budget increase for next year – although virtually all of it will be soaked up by the space shuttle – and no projects dear to the hearts of space researchers are in imminent danger of being scrapped. Overall, therefore, NASA has fared relatively well in the Administration's budgetary planning.

New obligations for NASA would increase by just over $300 million, to reach $3.5 billion next year. But development of the space shuttle alone would account for $1.2 billion, an increase of just over $400 million, so considerable belt tightening is in order elsewhere in the space agency.

One area which has been squeezed is space science. Although no major space research project will be scrapped next year, NASA was hoping to begin developing hardware for the Large Space Telescope – a project which was rated highest priority in a recent report by the National Academy of Sciences' Space Science Board. Because of the long lead times for space missions, unless some new projects are given the green light in FY 1977, there could well be a hiatus in space science activities in the late 1970s and early 1980s – just when the shuttle will be ready to put all those satellites into orbit.

One item which NASA officials evidently regard as a high point in the FY 1976 budget is that, after much dithering and under considerable pressure from Senator Frank Moss (D-Utah), who heads the Senate space committee, OMB has decided to allow NASA to go ahead with development of a third in the Earth Resources Technology Satellite (ERTS) series. And ERTS has even been given a trendier name – Landsat.

Dept. of Public Enlightenment

From atomic energy down to food additives, the definition of "reasonable risk" lies at the heart of many current controversies. The issue, a difficult one, has now been rendered considerably more opaque by R. David Pittle, a member of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, who in an address last November provided the following wallet-size definition:

"I would define a 'reasonable risk' as one where a consumer (a) understands by way of adequate warning or by way of public knowledge that a risk is associated with a product; (b) understands the probability of occurrence of an injury; (c) understands the potential severity of such an injury; (d) has been told how to cope with the risk; (e) cannot obtain the same benefits in less risky ways at the same or less cost; (f) would not, if given a choice, pay additional cost to eliminate or reduce the danger; and (g) voluntarily accepts the risks to get the benefit of the product."

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